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Three Reasons Why I want to be a foreign Missionary

by

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I want to be a Foreign Missionary

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To many people the name of foreign missionary is one of ominous sound, suggesting either a misguided enthusiast, or a person of most pain'ul and supernatural goodness. Now because I am just an ordinary girl, not classed under the first head I hope, not included under the second I am sure, I am glad to tell the other girls of our Reformed Church why, out of all the lines of work open to

women, that of the foreign missionary seems to me not only the most reasonable but the most attractive as well.

The first great reason that appeals to me is the desire for service, the wish to make life count for something. We all know what that means; we have all felt the horror of uselessness, the sickening feeling that we don't count for much anyway, that the world would go on quite as well without as with us. People tell us that once Christianity meant personal salvation from eternal punishment and liberty to sit down in an easy and comfortable expectation of going to heaven when we die. If the religion of Jesus Christ ever did mean anything so weak and selfish as that, the day is long past: to-day we girls, at least in our truest moments, object to sitting down in any kind of ease and comfort, whether material or spiritual,

while all around us, as some one has expressed it, "a world of sinning, suffering men, every man my brother, calls on me for work, work, work." We feel in our own lives all the happiness that can be given by culture and beautiful surroundings, by home and friendship, most of all by the love of Christ which glorifies all the rest; and yet in spite of these there remains an unfilled void, unless we can pass them on to some one else; and we know that the poet was right when he bade us

> "Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
> Not by the wine drunk but the wine poured forth."

Men call this desire for service the spirit of the times; I would rather call it the spirit of Jesus Christ, to which the times have at

last returned. Is it not the same longing that consumed His life who declared, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life," and who laid the same mission upon His followers when He said "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you;" "Freely ye have received, freely give."

My second "Reason Why" is the overwhelming need of the unchristianized world, which cries out for every bit of aid that I can offer, for every talent, be it great or small, that I possess. If I have determined to give my life in service, it is but reasonable to offer that service where the need for it is greatest. Mary Lyon used to tell her girls, "If you would truly serve, you must be willing to go where no one else will go, and to do what no one else will do." "But," people say, "there is so much to do right here at home."

There is much, the more shame upon us, but how much when compared with the need of those other lands? It is generally allowed that New York City, with its influx of foreign population, is the neediest portion of the United States, yet New York has more Christian workers to day than the whole of India, which has five times the population of the United States. And what is the condition of India? Its age-old religions, worm-eaten through and through, are falling into decay. The educated Hindu will no longer bow down to his three hundred and thirty millions of gods; he will have a religion which his intellect can respect or he will have no religion at all: and save where Christianity is stepping in to fill the breach, he is fast settling down into Agnosticism. One of the most eminent Hindus of the century cries out, "I fear for my countrymen,

lest from the hell of heathenism they fall into the deeper hell of infidelity." Yet the need of India is but an index of the need of every mission field. Right before me I have an appeal just issued by one of the prominent mission boards of this country asking for 214 missionaries to go out at once to fill the immediate needs of that one denomination. Do you wonder that the need of the world —the world for which Christ died—forms one of my strongest motives?

Yet the desire for service and the realization of need could not alone be sufficient; they might be enough to take me to the foreign field, driven by the spur of enthusiasm, but they could not keep me there. It is one thing to dream of love for the heathen while separated from them by thousands of miles: it will be another, meeting

them face to face, to find them often dirty and ignorant, even repulsive, possessed of a need so great that it does not recognize itself, of a degradation so deep that it seeks for no uplifting hand. Then it is that a third motive must enter in, a supreme faith in the Christ-like possibilities of every human heart. Because we are told that God created man in His own image, we must believe that somewhere, no matter how far out of sight, that image lingers still. Because Christ loved our human kind so much that He laid down His life for it, we also must believe in men and women, we also must love them, "even unto the end."

These then are my three reasons—The desire for service, the realization of the unutterable need of that service on the foreign field, the belief that the most degraded can be uplifted by the love

of Christ. Are there no other girls in our dear church to whom the same motives appeal? Have you ever wondered just why life has been given to you? Have you ever felt an indefinable longing to give to it a meaning it has never possessed? That very unrest may be the Master's bidding to follow Him. Or perhaps desire and ambition are calling loudly, persistently for their selfish gratification, while from the opposite direction comes the voice of Jesus, asking, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" Perhaps you will say that no such summons ever has come, that God has never called you to the foreign mission field. Are you quite sure that you have listened for His voice? Oh, girls, has He called you to a life of ease and luxury at home? And if you demand a definite call for the one, you must in all fairness examine carefully whether you have had a call to the

other. Let me only remind you of the words of Keith-Falconer, "While vast continents lie shrouded in utter darkness, oppressed by the horrors of heathenism or of Islam, the burden of proof lies upon me to show what reason I have to *keep me out* of the foreign mission field."